

# Upper School: reading and the 11 plus exam

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The importance of comprehension

# Why is reading so important?



Improves writing



Comprehension



Need to discuss  
books at interview



Broadens their  
world view



Evidence that it  
makes them into  
better people



Scientists have found  
that children who  
have fiction read to  
them regularly find it  
easier to understand  
other people – they  
show more empathy.

## Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Student "A" reads <b>20 minutes</b> each day	Student "B" reads <b>5 minutes</b> each day	Student "C" reads <b>1 minute</b> each day
3600 minutes in a school year	900 minutes in a school year	180 minutes in a school year

**1,800,000 words**



*90<sup>th</sup> percentile*

**282,000 words**



*50<sup>th</sup> percentile*

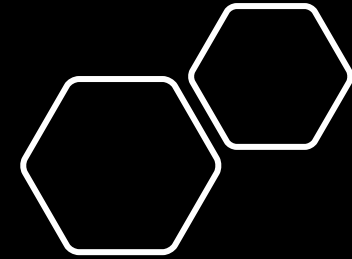
**8,000 words**



*10<sup>th</sup> percentile*

By the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)



## THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

### LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE  
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY  
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES  
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING  
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

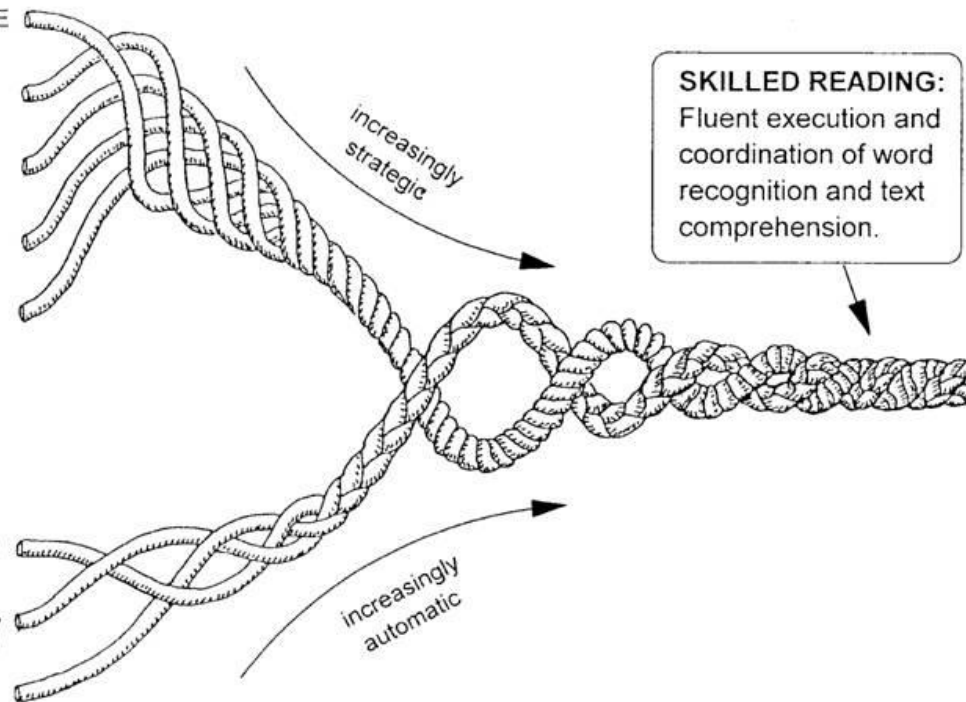
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE  
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

### WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS  
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING (alphabetic principle,  
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION  
(of familiar words)



**SKILLED READING:**  
Fluent execution and  
coordination of word  
recognition and text  
comprehension.

How do we  
read?



If the book is too hard and progress is slow then reading becomes frustrating....



**Independent level**

**Relatively easy** for the student to read (**19 out of 20 words read accurately**).

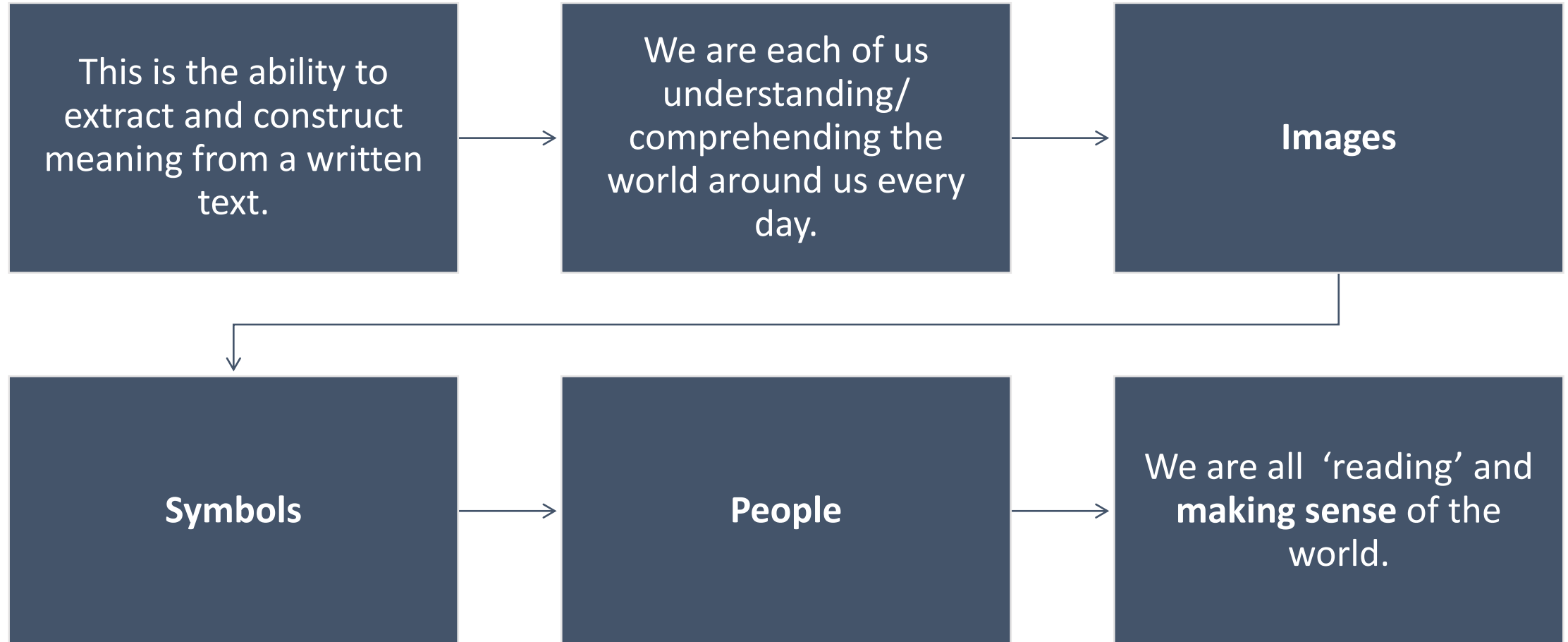
**Instructional level**

**Challenging** but manageable for the reader (**9 out of 10 words read correctly**).

**Frustration level**

**Difficult** text for the student to read (**2 or more errors in 10 words**).

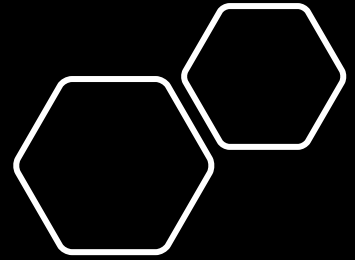
# Comprehension



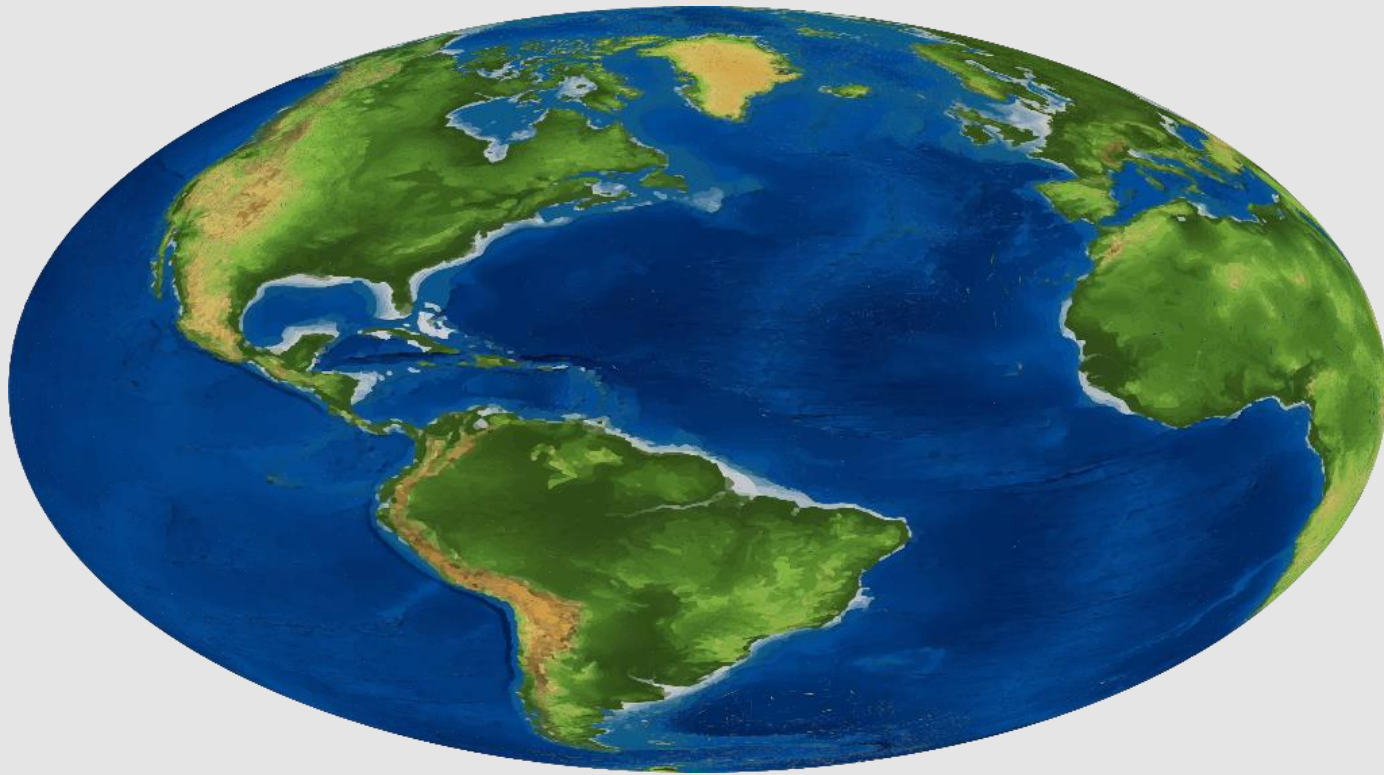
To read without  
reflecting is like  
eating without  
digesting.

- EDMUND BURKE

<http://fkb.me>







## Background knowledge

Relevant **background knowledge, prior knowledge,** or just plain experience, allows students to make connections to the text they are **reading** and so their comprehension increases.

Good **readers** constantly try to make sense out of what they read by seeing how it fits with what they already know.



## Helping your child to learn new vocabulary

- Look at a book together.
- Encourage them to ask if they do not understand a new word.
- Provide a **definition**. (Dictionaries can be used, but sometimes these definitions can be misleading.)
- Try to give an example that **relates to your child**.
- Ask them to use the word in a **sentence of their own**.
- **Revisit the word** later to check that they have understood it.

You can get bookmarks that provide definitions.

# Idioms



These are **phrases** and **sayings** that often occur in conversation and in books e.g.

- opening a can of worms
- cutting off your nose to spite your face
- when pigs fly

**Don't** assume that your children will know what they mean.



WHEN CHILDREN READ, THEY  
AUTOMATICALLY LEARN ABOUT  
**SENTENCE STRUCTURES.**



THEY START TO UNDERSTAND HOW  
WRITERS USE **LITERARY TECHNIQUES**  
SUCH AS METAPHORS.



THEY START TO UNDERSTAND THAT  
THERE ARE **DIFFERENT TYPES OF**  
**WRITING**, I.E. DIFFERENT GENRES.



**ALL OF THIS WILL FEED INTO THEIR**  
**ABILITY TO COMPREHEND AND**  
**ENJOY WHAT THEY ARE READING.**

What else are  
children  
learning when  
they read?

# Comprehension questions

In exams children will need to answer different types of questions:

1. **Literal** = 'What colour is the man's hat?'
2. **Inferential** = 'Why is he wearing it?'
3. **Vocabulary** = 'Why has the author used 'flamboyant' to describe the hat?'
4. **Evaluative** = 'Would you want to wear a red hat like that?'

# Questions to ask when reading

- What **has happened** so far?
- What can you tell me about the **characters**? How do you know this?
- **Why** do you think that **character behaved** in that way?
- Would **you** have done the same thing? Why?
- Why do you think the **author** has used that particular word?
- What do you think is going to **happen next**?



# Your child is a literary critic

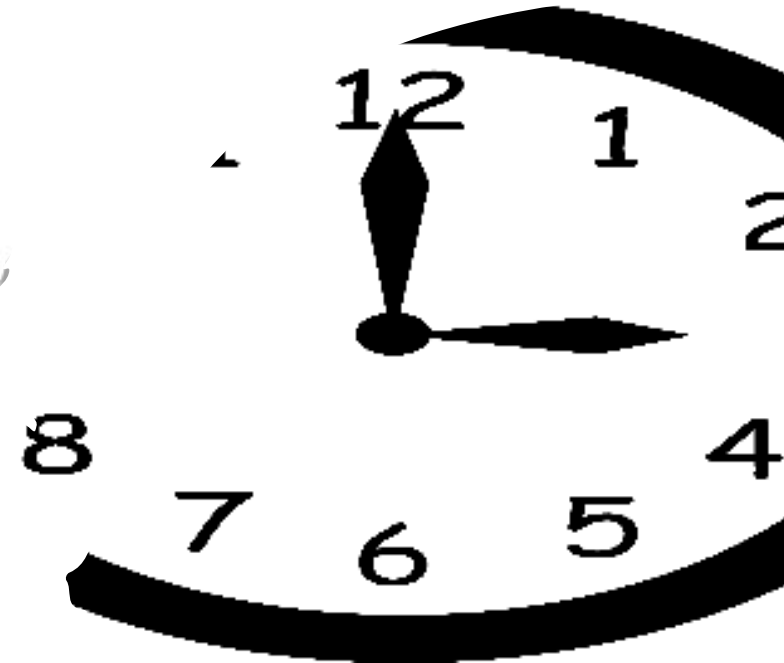


- Encourage your child to ask questions:
  - ‘I wonder why the girl dislikes the man so much...’
  - ‘I wonder who stole the diamonds...’
- **Highlight and annotate** the text (if it’s not a library book).
- Tell them that **their opinion counts**: there is not always one right answer.


# Problems

- Reluctance
- Finding the right book
- Time

What can you do to help?







What can you  
do over the  
summer  
holidays?

- Visit the **library**
- Discuss **their** books
- Discuss **your** books
- Read to them (**shared reading**)
- Read **newspapers** and **magazines**
- Read **non-fiction** ( biographies, sports books...)
- Read **short stories**
- Read **graphic novels**
- Listen to **audio books**

**Above all try to enjoy it!!!**

# Useful Websites

Reading Lists:

The Roche School Website:

<https://therocheschool.com/library-2-2/>

Book Trust: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/our-recommendations/100-best-books/>

Goodread:

<https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/childrens>



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